

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 00432 142037Z  
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S E C R E T AMMAN 0432

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PGOV,JO, PLO, XF  
SUBJECT: HUSSEIN'S NEXT STEPS

REF: STATE 007197

SUMMARY: I DELIVERED TO HUSSEIN DETAILS REFTEL OF OUR EFFORTS ON JERUSALEM AGENDA. HE HAS BEEN DEEPLY AFFECTED BY INTERVIEW WHICH SADAT HAS GIVEN (CARRIED BY UPI TODAY) WHICH IS VERY GLOOMY ABOUT PEACE PROSPECTS AND HUSSEIN SEEMS CONVINCED THAT PRESENT EFFORTS WILL FAIL AND THAT GENEVA CANNOT BE REVIVED. HIS THOUGHTS ARE TURNING TO INVITING PLO TO AMMAN FOR DIALOGUE IN NEXT 24 TO 48 HOURS WHILE ISSUE OF NEGOTIATIONS STILL OPEN. HE WANTS TO DO THIS PREPARATORY TO SEEING LIBYANS, ALGERIANS, IRAQIS AND OTHERS BOTH TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL HIS LINES ARE KEPT OPEN, THAT HE MAKES AN EFFORT NOW TO GET PLO TO BEGIN TO MOVE TOWARD SOME MORE ACCOMODATING POSITION, AND SO THAT THE PALESTINIANS GET SOME SORT OF REPRESENTATION WORTHY OF THEIR NEEDS. HE STILL DEEPLY DISPONDENT ABOUT SAUDI POSITION AND THEIR FAILURE TO HELP HIM. END SUMMARY.

1. I LEFT WORD WITH HUSSEIN'S STAFF THAT I WANTED TO SEE HIM TO FOLLOW UP MY FEW WORDS TO HIM JANUARY 12 ON QUESTION  
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OF JERUSALEM AGENDA. HE TELEPHONED ME IN MID-AFTERNOON AND READ OVER A UPI REPORT OF AN INTERVIEW WHICH SADAT HAS GIVEN TO "OCTOBER" MAGAZINE DEEPLY GLOOMY ABOUT THE FUTURE. WE THEN MET LATER IN THE EARLY EVENING AT HASHEMIYAH PALACE. I GAVE HIM THE INFORMATION ON OUR EFFORTS TOWARD AN AGENDA. HE REACTED THAT HE THOUGHT WE WERE ON THE RIGHT TRACK, BUT IF SADAT NOW FELT IT WAS TIME TO THROW IN THE SPONGE,

THEN IT MIGHT ALL BE TO NO AVAIL. I SAID THAT YOU COULD ALSO LOOK AT THE INTERVIEW AS BUILDING PRESSURE ON THE ISRAELIS. HUSSEIN SAID HE DID NOT THINK SO, BUT THAT SADAT MIGHT WELL END UP DOING WHAT NASR DID IN JUNE OF 1967, RESIGN, BE CALLED BACK, AND THEN START OFF ON A DIFFERENT TACK. IN ANY EVENT, IF SADAT FAILED HE DID NOT THINK GENEVA COULD BE STARTED. HE WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER HE THOUGHT A GO-TO-WAR OPTION WOULD RESULT, BUT IMPLIED THIS.

2. HE THEN TURNED TO HIS OWN IDEAS. BUILDING ON A POINT HE MADE TO ME LAST THURSDAY, HE SAID HE NOW THOUGHT EVEN MORE OF THE IDEA OF OPENING A DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO. HE COULD INVITE THEM TO AMMAN SOON AND TELL THEM IT WAS TIME FOR THEM TO ASSUME THEIR REAL RESPONSIBILITIES. HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE RESULT WOULD BE. BUT JORDAN SHOULD INITIATE THIS. IF SADAT FAILED, THE SAUDIS, LIBYA, ALGERIA, SYRIA AND THE REST WOULD ALL PUSH JORDAN TO DO THIS ANYWAY. LAST WEEK SADAT WAS FOR THIS DIALOGUE. NEXT WEEK HE MIGHT BE FOR IT AGAIN.

3. AS WE TALKED I TOLD HUSSEIN THAT I THOUGHT THERE WERE BOTH ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES TO SUCH A STEP. THE PLO WAS DOWN NOW. REOPENING A DIALOGUE WITH JORDAN MIGHT TEND TO MAKE HIM LOOK LIKE THE DEMANDEUR AND REVIVE THEIR HOPES FALSELY. THE ISRAELIS WOULD NOT LOOK ON IT FAVORABLY. THE EGYPTIANS HAD COME A LONG WAY TOWARD EXCLUDING THE PLO. ON THE PLUS SIDE, WHETHER SADAT FAILED OR NOT, JORDAN WOULD BE TAKING CARE  
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OF ITS OWN POSITION WITH THE RADICALS AND THE OTHER ARABS. HUSSEIN MADE THE POINT THAT JORDAN COULD NOT EXCLUDE THE PALESTINIANS AND THAT HE WOULD RATHER TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND CONTROL THE PACE AND TERMS OF DISCUSSION THAN BE PUSHED INTO BY THE OTHER ARABS. IF SADAT FAILED IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT FOR SOMEONE (I.E. HUSSEIN) TO HAVE CONTACTS WITH ALL THE ARABS INCLUDING SADAT AND THE PLO. NO ONE ELSE WOULD PLAY THAT ROLE. ALSO IT WOULD BE BETTER TO HAVE TRIED OUT THE PLO BEFORE SEEING LIBYA AND THE OTHERS, THEN HE COULD TELL THEM IN EFFECT HE HAD TRIED ALREADY WHAT THEY WERE BOUND TO PRESS HIM TO DO. HE ASSURED ME THAT HE WOULD NOT CHANGE HIS BASIC POSITION ON A PEACE SETTLEMENT OR ON PERMITTING THE PLO TO RETURN TO JORDAN.

4. WE ALSO SPOKE FRANKLY ABOUT FACT THAT US HAD ALSO TRIED TO GET THE PLO TO ACT RESPONSIBLY REGARDING NEGOTIATIONS. IF HE TRIED NOW IT MIGHT LOOK TO MANY THAT WE WERE ON GREATLY DIVERGENT COURSE. HE SAID HE DID NOT THINK SO. THE PROCEDURAL FORMULAS FOR GENEVA WE HAD ALL TALKED ABOUT INVOLVED THE PALESTINIANS AND WE WERE AGREED ON THAT POINT. NO OTHER STATE COULD REPRESENT THEM AND HE DID NOT SEE A NON-PLO GROUP EMERGING ON THE WEST BANK TO DO SO. OUR REAL HOPE WAS TO GET TO THE PLO AND TO BEGIN TO GET IT TO THINK ABOUT CHANGING ITS

APPROACH AND LIVING UP TO ITS RESPONSIBILITIES. IN THE LONG RUN,  
EVEN THE ISRAELIS WOULD RECOGNIZE THAT SUCH AN APPROACH COULD WORK.

5. WE SPOKE BRIEFLY ABOUT HIS DOMESTIC SUPPORT IN JORDAN.  
HE SAID HE THOUGHT HIS PEOPLE WERE WITH HIM AND THAT HE WAS  
REASONABLY FREE TO DO WHAT HE WANTED. THE TALKS (RESPONDING  
TO A QUESTION FROM ME), HE SAID, COULD BE KEPT SECRET; HE  
WOULD JUST ASK THE PLO OFFICE HERE TO SEND SOME LEADERS TO SEE  
HIM. I SAID I THOUGHT THE TALKS WOULD PROBABLY LEAK. HE  
HAD FEELERS FOR A MEETING WITH THE PLO IN RIYADH SEVERAL WEEKS  
AGO. I POINTED OUT THAT SOME OF HIS EAST BANKERS MIGHT NOT  
BE TOO HAPPY, AND SOME PALESTINIANS HERE WOULD ALSO NOT LOOK  
TOO HAPPILY ON THE POSSIBILITY OF EXCHANGING THEIR PRESENT  
POSITION FOR ONE MORE CLOSELY RELATED TO THE PLO. HE SAID  
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HE THOUGHT THIS COULD BE MANAGED.

6. HUSSEIN REPEATED AGAIN HIS UNHAPPINESS WITH THE SAUDIS  
AND THE OTHERS IN THE GULF WHO ARE NOT SUPPORTING HIM IN HIS  
DEFENSE NEEDS. HE NOTED THAT HE WOULD REALLY LIKE TO HEAR  
WHAT WE THOUGHT THE SAUDIS POSITION WAS? HE WAS WORRIED  
BY AN UPSURGE OF RADICAL IDEAS IN SAUDI ARABIA AND THE FAILURE  
OF THE PRESENT LEADERS TO COME TO GRIPS WITH ITS PROBLEMS.  
MAYBE LIBYA WOULD HELP WITH MONEY AND MAYBE THE SAUDIS ONLY  
RESPONDED TO THREATS. IF SO, HE WOULD HAVE TO TRY IT.

7. HUSSEIN SAID HE HAS SPOKEN WITH HIS ADVISORS ABOUT HIS  
IDEA OF TALKING WITH THE PLO. "AS USUAL ABDUL HAID (SHARAF)  
IS AGAINST IT". HE PROMISED TO KEEP ME INFORMED IF HE MAKES  
A DECISION TO INVITE THE PLO TO TALK.

8. COMMENT: HUSSEIN IS OBVIOUSLY GLOOMY AND FEARFUL.  
I DID NOT TRY TO INFLUENCE HIM AT THIS POINT, BUT ONLY WENT  
OVER WITH HIM THE PROS AND CONS AND VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES  
OPEN TO HIM. I SUSPECT HE WILL SHORTLY MAKE UP HIS MIND AND  
UNLESS SOMETHING UNFORESEEN INTERVENES, WILL PROBABLY OPT  
FOR TRYING TO OPEN A DIALOGUE. IF YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS OR THOUGHTS  
TO PASS ON, I SHOULD HAVE THEM VERY SOON IF THEY ARE TO  
REGISTER BEFORE ANY FINAL DECISION IS MADE.  
PICKERING

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## Message Attributes

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